



1995-96 KIRIS OPEN-RESPONSE ITEM SCORING WORKSHEET

Grade 11 — Reading Question 3

Type of Passage: Literary

The academic expectation addressed by this item includes:

1.2 Students make sense of the variety of materials they read.

The core content assessed by this item includes:

- Interpret the meaning of a passage taken from texts . . .
- Interpret figurative, idiomatic, and symbolic language in a passage.

3. Sandburg/Shakespeare

There are several similar examples of fatherly advice given in the poem and in the excerpt. Choose at least two examples of this advice and explain how they are similar.

SCORING GUIDE

Score	Description
4	Response clearly states and identifies two or more pieces of similar fatherly advice in both the excerpt and the poem. Response provides clear, thorough connection and explanation as to how examples demonstrate similarities in advice in both pieces.
3	Response clearly states and identifies one piece of similar fatherly advice in both the excerpt and the poem. Response provides a clear thorough explanation as to how examples demonstrate similarities of advice in both pieces. OR Response clearly states and identifies two or more pieces of similar fatherly advice in both the excerpt and the poem but response provides clear, thorough connection and explanation as to how examples demonstrate similarities of advice in both pieces for only one.
2	Response identifies two pieces of similar advice from poem and excerpt but provides no explanation. OR Response provides/lists similar examples with some general explanation, but provides no direct connection between examples.
1	Response provides a list of valid example(s) of advice from text only, but does not connect examples to each other.
0	Response is incorrect or irrelevant.
Blank	Blank/no response.

SIMILAR IDEAS IN BOTH PIECES

Be careful of/with money
Be civilized

Be careful of what you say to others
Tell the truth
Be true to yourself

Carl Sandburg's poem, "A Father Sees a Son Nearing Manhood," and a famous excerpt from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*—in which Polonius speaks to his son Laertes—share advice offered by a parent to his child. Read the poem below and the excerpt from *Hamlet* on the next page. Then answer question 3.

A Father Sees a Son Nearing Manhood

Carl Sandburg

A father sees a son nearing manhood.
What shall he tell that son?
"Life is hard; be steel; be a rock."
And this might stand him for the storms
and serve him for humdrum and monotony
and guide him amid sudden betrayals
and tighten him for slack moments.
"Life is a soft loam; be gentle; go easy."
And this too might serve him.
Brutes have been gentled where lashes failed.
The growth of a frail flower in a path up
has sometimes shattered and split a rock.
A tough will counts. So does desire.
So does a rich soft wanting.
Without rich wanting nothing arrives.
Tell him too much money has killed men
and left them dead years before burial:
the quest of lucre beyond a few easy needs
has twisted good enough men
sometimes into dry thwarted works.
Tell him time as a stuff can be wasted.
Tell him to be a fool every so often
and to have no shame over having been a fool
yet learning something out of every folly
hoping to repeat none of the cheap follies
thus arriving at intimate understanding
of a world numbering many fools.
Tell him to be alone often and get at himself
and above all tell himself no lies about himself
whatever the white lies and protective fronts
he may use amongst other people.
Tell him solitude is creative if he is strong
and the final decisions are made in silent rooms.
Tell him to be different from other people
if it comes natural and easy being different.
Let him have lazy days seeking his deeper motives.
Let him seek deep for where he is a born natural.
Then he may understand Shakespeare
and the Wright brothers, Pasteur, Pavlov,
Michael Faraday and free imaginations
bringing changes into a world resenting change.
He will be lonely enough
to have time for the work
he knows as his own.

Polonius's Advice to Laertes
(excerpted from *Hamlet*, Act I, scene iii)
William Shakespeare

Yet here, Laertes? Aboard, aboard, for shame!
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
And you are stayed for. There - my blessing with thee,
And these few precepts in thy memory
Look thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportioned thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them unto thy soul with hoops of steel,
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatched, unfledged courage. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel; but being in,
Bear't that th' opposed may beware of thee.
Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice;
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not expressed in fancy; rich, not gaudy,
For the apparel oft proclaims the man,
And they in France of the best rank and station
Are of a most select and generous chief in that.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be,
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all, to thine own self be true,
And it must follow as the night the day
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
Farewell. My blessing season this in thee!

Polonius's speech from *Hamlet*, Act I, scene iii, by William Shakespeare.



KIRIS ASSESSMENT ANNOTATED RESPONSE

GRADE 11 READING

Sample 4-Point Response of Student Work

In both poems, the advice seems about the same. In “A Father Sees a Son Nearing Manhood,” the father tells the son “...above all tell himself no lies about himself,” and in Hamlet, Polonius tells Laertes, “to thine own self be true.” Each is saying to be true to yourself, and do not live in a false pretense. Both poets warn the son to be wise about spending money, but for different reasons. In both poems, the sons are warned to keep their thoughts quiet. In the first poem, the author says that “final decisions are made in silent rooms.” In the second poem, it is stated to “Give thy thoughts no tongue.” I think both poets want the son to observe the world and learn from watching and learn from their own mistakes.

Student clearly identifies three examples of fatherly advice: be true to oneself, spend wisely, and keep thoughts quiet.

Student summarizes his/her personal interpretation of the passages’ themes

Student cites phrases from the passages to effectively explain two of the similarities.

Summary annotation statement: Student appropriately interprets the meaning of the two poems and provides examples of figurative language from the text in supporting his/her response.

Sample 3-Point Response of Student Work

Carl Sandburg’s poem, “A Father Sees a Son Nearing Manhood,” and Polonius’s advice to Laertes can be compared in a couple of ways. Sandburg says, “Tell him to be alone often and get at himself and above all tell himself no lies about himself whatever the white lies and protective fronts he may use amongst other people.” Compared to Shakespeare, “Neither a borrower not a lender be, For loan oft loses both itself and friend, and borrowing dulleth edge of husbandry. This above all, to thine own self be true.” They are both stating to be true to yourself, don’t try to lie to yourself. “Tough will” (Sandburg) and “unfledged courage” (Shakespeare) is saying to be strong and have courage and faith in yourself.

Student identifies two sets of fatherly advice: be true to oneself, and have faith in oneself.

Student cites several phrases from the passages to explain the idea of being true to oneself.

Student gives minimal support for interpretation of the passages’ themes of being strong and having faith in self.

Summary annotation statement: Student adequately interprets the meaning of the two poems stressing one set of advice. The examples focus more on the literal language of the texts.



KIRIS ASSESSMENT ANNOTATED RESPONSE

GRADE 11 READING

Sample 2-Point Response of Student Work

In the poems “A father sees a son nearing Manhood” and “Polonius” The two fathers give similar advice, Too much money has killed men and left them dead years before burial, and, Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy, These similar statements have meaning, Do not give too much time to money or you’ll become corrupted. To thine own self be true, to be different from other people, these statements tell the son to live his own life.

Student identifies two examples of similar fatherly advice: do not give too much time to money and live one’s own life.

Student’s citation from Polonius’s advice does not support his/her interpretation.

Student’s explanation is limited.

Summary annotation statement: Student attempts to interpret the figurative language and the meaning of the two poems.

Sample 1-Point Response of Student Work

In both poem and excerpt the fathers tell their sons to be themselves not to follow others. It was also said to be true and not lies to any man.

Student identifies two examples of fatherly advice but provides no supporting examples or explanation for the similarities.

Summary annotation statement: Student provides a minimal interpretation of the two poems.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Literary -- “A Father Sees a Son Nearing Manhood” -- Carl Sandburg
“Polonius’s Advice to Laertes” -- William Shakespeare

Ask students to compare two literary works within the same genre (short stories, novels, plays, or poems) focusing on various aspects of theme, character, plot, setting, point of view, etc. For example, select two poems (see suggested titles below), or have students select two poems that are similar in some way. The following, taken directly from *Core Content, Version 1.0*, are possible options for comparison:

- Evaluate the influence of characters, setting, point of view, plot, or structure within a given passage.
- Analyze the effect of theme, conflict and resolution, symbolism, satire, irony, analogies, and metaphors.
- Interpret figurative, idiomatic, and symbolic language.
- Critique the author’s word choice, style, content, and use of literary elements.

Suggested Title for Comparison

“To an Athlete Dying Young” by A.E. Housman and “Elegy in a Country Churchyard” by Thomas Gray

“Sonnet 18” and “Sonnet 73” by William Shakespeare

“Apparently with No Surprise” by Emily Dickinson and “Design” by Robert Frost

“Trees” by Joyce Kilmer and “Trees” by Howard Nemerov

“Ballad of the Landlord” by Langston Hughes and “La Belle Dame Sans Merci” by John Keats

References

Roberts, Edgar V., *Writing Themes about Literature*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1991.
Perrine, Laurence, *Sound and Sense: An Introduction to Poetry*, Harcourt Brace Janovich, New York, 1987.
Pichaske, David R. *Beowulf to Beetle: Approaches to Poetry*, The Free Press, New York, 1972.
Transformations: Kentucky’s Curriculum Framework, Kentucky Department of Education